

## Step 4: Engage your community and continually improve

*Diversity and inclusion activities should not only focus internally but also have an external lens and impact. Organizations are made of employees that come from the community; therefore, the connection to the communities they represent as well as the locales where the organization is located is essential.*

*Having a pulse on and engagement with the community will help build your diversity and inclusion brand and public image. Volunteering also shows to have positive effects on personal well-being, skill development, teamwork and health so there is also a direct link to your employees directly which will help your organization overall.*

*From the inside out, employees will strengthen corporate citizenship through engagement, compassion, ideas, and energy.*

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**As you consider the ways your organization can link corporate diversity efforts to community engagement for measurable results, consider the following:**

**Assess the communities where your employees are from and the locales of your organizations.**

- *What are the needs of your surrounding communities?*
- *Consider why you would want to serve the community?*

This should drive the awareness of community challenges and then the identification of ways the organization may be able to help.

**Review/create policies around volunteerism and release time for employees.**

Publicly stating the policies related to employee volunteerism and release time emphasizes the company's values around giving back to the community. This shows a substantiated investment in the employee and their connections.

**Develop initiatives that are steeped in relationships with other local businesses and schools.**

- *The community initiatives should obviously try to incorporate as much of the community as possible.*
- *Look for ways to partner with other organizations, businesses, schools and universities.*

Create turnkey opportunities for your employees in order to make volunteering easier and possibly create more engagement and impact with a focused event.



Community engagement and an organization's diversity efforts should be linked and strengthen the brand of the organization externally but also internally as employees see you believe in the communities they represent.

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Another way to think of how your diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts are impacting the community around you is through review of your supplier diversity. A [Supplier Diversity program](#) is a proactive business program that encourages the use of businesses that are owned by women, veterans, those who identify as LGBTQ+, culturally diverse populations and others.

### How can you incorporate supplier diversity within your strategic diversity plan?

Learn about local resources for diversity businesses.

- *Create a process for ways your organization will partner with small and diverse businesses. How will you find ways to get in front of these companies?*
- *Research and use the resources that are established to aid these types of businesses.*
- *Learn of the initiatives and organizations aligned with the [U.S. Small Business Administration](#) or the [National Minority Supplier Development Council](#) or even the [Minority Business Development Agency](#).*

These organizations are great resources to learn what businesses are connected with them and possible ones you can partner with.

Identify and mitigate gaps in diversity spend.

When you were pulling your data in earlier steps to find your baseline, you possibly noted diversity spending across your organization. You will want to find metrics and attempt to close gaps around those suppliers that directly invoice to your organization (Tier 1). You will also want to be thinking about the sub-contractors involved with your Tier 1 suppliers. Continue to calculate these dollars monthly, quarterly and annually.



Looking at how your organization spends its dollars can also show and align with your values. Inequities exist within the entire business ecosystem. Therefore, the more you seek to align your diversity, equity, and inclusion values with your dollars, the more you can show that you are truly “putting your money where your mouth is.”